

1. DESCRIBE THE PRACTICE PROPOSED FOR RECOGNITION, AND LIST ITS OBJECTIVES. DETAIL HOW THE PRACTICE PROMOTES HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND HOW IT CAN BE REPLICATED. (50 LINES MAX.)

A reading incentive program entitled "The Reading Galaxy" was implemented at our primary school. The objectives of this program are to promote literacy through reading, to motivate the enjoyment of a wide variety of reading, to develop both shared reading and independent reading skills, and to encourage public library use. The goal of each student is to read a minimum number of hours within a 5 week period. Second and third grade students have a minimum goal of 20 hours, first grade students have a minimum goal of 16 hours, and kindergarten students have a minimum goal of 12 hours.

The multi-faceted nature of this five-week-long program fosters a sense of reading community within the school and at home by relying on the support of school staff, students, and parents. The basic program involves students recording the amount of time spent reading or being read to on a reading log. All students have a starship nametag displayed on a school hallway bulletin board marked "Earth". As students reach their individual reading log goals [ 5 hours for grades 2 & 3, 4 hours for grade 1, 3 hours for kindergarten], they will turn in the log and their starship will blast off to another decorated hallway bulletin board. For the Reading Galaxy, our bulletin boards were decorated as follows: Earth (launch pad/starting position), Mars, Asteroid Belt, Outer Planets, Black Hole. The inner planets were displayed on the walls in front of the Earth launch pad bulletin board. The goal of each student is to reach the final bulletin board, the Black Hole. Students who reach the final bulletin board before the program ends are recognized with a star sticker added to their starship for each additional log turned in. Teachers and parents work collaboratively to encourage the students to reach their reading goals. In-school classroom reading and at-home reading both count toward student reading goals. "Star Power" tickets are given to students who respond to the literature through writing and illustration or who visit the public library. These tickets count as one hour of reading time on student logs.

In addition, during this program one morning is set aside for a "Reading Comet", an event when all staff, students, and parent volunteers form a chain of readers in the school hallways for 20 minutes. Also, a "Space Station" reading night is held where each student is invited to come to the school at night in his or her pajamas to be read to for an hour by parents and staff members in small groups. A short exercise break led by the gym teacher (who dressed up like an alien) is taken in the middle of the story time. This event featured a portable planetarium experience for the children last year.

At the end of the program, each participating student receives a certificate at a parent-teacher supported reading party. All students receive a book to continue their reading. Last year, our top readers in each grade were allowed to pick names out of a school wide raffle and each grade received its own star in the sky.

2. DESCRIBE THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS THAT THE PRACTICE ADDRESSES AND HOW THEY WERE IDENTIFIED. LIST THE CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT AND CROSS-CONTENT WORKPLACE READINESS STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THE PRACTICE AND DESCRIBE HOW THE PRACTICE ADDRESSES THE STANDARD(S). (50 LINES MAX.)

All students were invited to participate in this voluntary program. We believe that all students will benefit from developing their reading habits and using their public library to obtain information and reading materials. This practice addresses many core curriculum standards, especially in the Language Arts Literacy and Cross-Content Workplace Readiness areas.

The Reading Galaxy's objectives are mirrored in the New Jersey Language Arts Literacy curriculum standard 3.1, in the descriptive statement, "Language arts literacy develops when students in large and small groups engage in discourse and dialogue about literature, non-fiction, and topics of interest". By inviting the entire school to participate in a school hallway tally of time spent reading and by reading together in groups during the Reading Comet reading train morning event and during the Space Station reading night, the Reading Galaxy activities designed in this practice encourage large and small groups to read together for the purpose of enjoyment. The Reading Galaxy seeks to create an environment where all reading is valued. In Language Arts Literacy standard 3.4, indicator 4 "students use reading for different purposes, such as enjoyment" and indicator 5 "students read independently a variety of literature written by authors of different cultures, ethnicities, genders, and ages" is demonstrated in the way that the Reading Galaxy encourages freedom of choice in selecting titles to read to count towards each student reading goal.

In addition, students demonstrate New Jersey Cross-Content Workplace Readiness standard 4 “all students will demonstrate self-management skills” as they work towards their reading goal and chart their progress in their reading logs and on the hallway bulletin boards. The indicators 1, 3, and 9 support this student recording as well with their statements: “All students will be able to set short and long term goals” (indicator 1), “all students will be able to evaluate their own actions and accomplishment” (indicator 3), and “all students will be able to use time efficiently and effectively” (indicator 9).

### 3. DOCUMENT THE ASSESSMENT MEASURES USED TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE HAVE BEEN MET. (60 LINES MAX.)

Ninety-eight percent of our students chose to participate in this program (413 out of a total 420 students). Of the participants, 70% of the kindergarteners reached their goal of 12 hours, 79% of the first graders reached their goal of 16 hours, 75% of second graders reached their goal of 20 hours, and 70% of the third graders reached their goal of 20 hours of reading in four weeks. On average, 74% of the participants were able to reach their goals, with 28% of student readers exceeding their goals. Twenty-four percent of kindergarteners exceeded their reading goal, as did 40% of first graders, 15% of second graders, and 30% of third graders. Our top readers per grade level did a fantastic job of reading. In a four week period, our top kindergarten reader read for 21 hours, our top first grader reader for 44 hours, our top second grade reader for 50 hours, and our top third grade reader for 60 hours. Student progress is recorded through the student log recordings and starship nametag progression along the hallway bulletin boards.

As a school, readers read for approximately 6,574 hours. In an average four-week school month, our average student spends 10 hours reading. At this rate, the participants of our reading incentive program collectively will have read 4,130 hours in an average month. During the Reading Galaxy, then, our participating students read 63% more than their average reading time. Such an increase serves to demonstrate that our participating students achieved the objectives of this program by reaching their reading log goals, developing an increase in their reading skills, and hopefully, in student enjoyment of reading. Recording of the number of Star Power Tickets entered from our public library onto the logs demonstrated that 55% of our students went to the public library, an increase from our approximate average student public library participation of 33%.

Follow-up surveys were sent to staff to enable adjustments to this program for the next year. Our school has been conducting this reading incentive program for the past three years with a different theme each year.